(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any demand from the State Governments for providing them with the services to the remote villages and if so, the State-wise demand; and

(d) the action taken by Government to meet the demands of the State Governments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited, a Government of India Enterprise under Department of Telecom is inducting Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) equipment to provide village public telephones and other telephone lines in the rural network.

(b) Purchase Order for procurement of 2 lakh lines of WLL equipment has already been issued. The supply of equipment has commenced from the last week of March, 2001. Additional 4 lakh lines of WLL system are being procured.

(c) and (d) Requests have been recieved from State Government of Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand. Andhra Pradesh State Government has requested for 30,000 lines of WLL systems where as Jharkhand Government has requested to induct WLL Systems on a large scale without mentioning any specific numbers. Requests of Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand State Governments are under active consideration and sufficient number of WLL lines will be allotted to these two States.

Refunds to subscribers by cellular operators

†4159. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:
SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has directed the cellular operators to refund

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

approximately 13 per cent of the total charges collected from subscribers;

(b) the manner in which the operators will calculate the refund for subscribers under different schemes; and

(c) the steps TRAI has taken to check operators so that they refund correct amount to subscribers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) The Telecommunication Tariff (Twelfth Amendment) Order, 2001 notified by TRAI on 25.01.2001 specified the amount of refunds that shall be made by cellular service providers to subscribers of cellular mobile service as a result of reduction in license fee. The Order contains the amount of refund of rental per subscriber as will as refund per minute of use by the subscriber for each company. The aggregate refund amounts for each company will depend upon individual subscriber usage during the relevant period. Details on the exact amount of refund would be available when the operators submit their final reports, which are required to be submitted at the end of four months beginning 1st April, 2001.

(b) The Telecommunication Tarrif (Twelfth Amendment) Order, 2001 contains Table I through VIII that specify separately the amount of refund due to the subscribers of the following tariff plans:—

(i) Standard Tariff Package

(ii) Alternative Tariff Package; and

(iii) Pre-paid Tariff Package.

Based on Table I through VIII, service providers will calculate the amounts due to individual subscribers based on minute of use for that subscriber during the relevant period.

(c) The methodology for providing refunds has been specified in the Telecommunication Tariff (Twelfth Amendment) Order, 2001. Every service provider is required to submit to TRAI its detailed plan of providing the subscribers the refund notified in the Order. A report on the actual amount refunded under each of the tariff

packages offered by the service provider is required to be provided to TRAI at the end of the stipulated period of four months beginning 1st April, 2001. The service providers must also submit to TRAI amount of refund that could not be made because the subscriber could not be traced. TRAI would consider the option of appropriate utilisations of this amount.

Disinvestment of Government share in VSNL

4160. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had decided to disinvest its equity in Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited on 31st January, 2001;

(b) if so, whether Government has undertaken any exercise of re-evaluate assets of the company at the current rate;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor;

(e) whether it is also a fact that most of the physical assets like real estate was acquired by the company at discount from the States because it has been a Central PSU; and

(f) whether States where such assets are located will be compensated on account of privatisation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Government had taken a decision on 1.2.2001 to disinvest a portion of its equity in Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited.

(b) to (d) the stage is not yet ripe for undertaking the exercise to re-evaluate the assets of the company.

(e) VSNL has not acquired any physical assets from the States at discounted prices on the basis of VSNL being a Central PSU.

(f) In view of (e) above, question does not arise.